

Remarks:

This amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance this case to issue without delay.

The translation serving as specification has been amended to eliminate some minor obvious errors and to place it in better US form. No new matter whatsoever has been added. The Abstract has also been redone.

The translated claims have been replaced with a set of US-style claims. Main claim 5 describes as shown in FIGS. 1-3 a holder for a collar 2 centered on an axis and having an axially forwardly directed shoulder 7 and axially rearward thereof a radially outwardly directed centering surface. The holder comprises:

a drive sleeve 5 also centered on the axis and fitted over the collar 2;

a plurality of angularly spaced jaws 6 in the sleeve 5 having outer ends each formed with an axially rearwardly directed face 13, the jaws 6 being displaceable radially between an outer clamping position with their faces 13 bearing on the shoulder 7 and an inner releasing position with their faces 13 out of engagement with the collar 2;

means including an axially displaceable actuating member 3 in the sleeve 5 for moving the jaws 6 between their inner and outer positions; and

a retainer 8 having a plurality of axially extending fingers 9 each having a front end with an axially rearwardly directed face 10 and axially rearward thereof a radially outwardly directed centering face 11, the fingers 9 each being radially elastically deformable between an outer position with the front-end faces 10 bearing axially rearward on the shoulder 7 and the centering faces 11 bearing radially outward on the collar centering surface and an inner position out of contact with the collar 2.

Thus this system is an improvement on US 6,419,430 of Hangleiter, which is the US equivalent of the German reference cited in the original background as admitted prior art. It is distinguished from that system in that the fingers 9 have faces 10 that bear outward on the inner surface of the collar 2 to center it. In Hangleiter the only comparable structure has no surface radially outwardly engageable with an inner surface of the collar. As clearly shown in the drawing, the corresponding outer surface of the retainer in Hangleiter is always out of contact with the collar so that it has no centering function at all and does not meet the explicit language of main claim 5. No §102 rejection is possible because the structure is different, and no discussion of using this retainer in this manner for centering is hinted at, so a §103 rejection is similarly out of the question.

In Rohm '399 (now US patent 6,568,889) there is no retainer at all, just the locking jaws. This reference is irrelevant to the instant invention.

Thus the claims are all allowable over the cited art. Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If only minor problems that could be corrected by means of a telephone conference stand in the way of allowance of this case, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned to make the necessary corrections.

Respectfully submitted,  
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